

THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO



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NEWS RELEASE

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City Heights Receives Jobs Housing and Business Assistance

Council Approves Metro Career Center and Villas Offers Help to Business Improvement District

SAN DIEGO--Councilmember Toni Atkins helped move the City Heights community forward today by spearheading two separate initiatives before the City Council.

The Council unanimously approved the Metro Center project at University Avenue and I-15. In addition to housing the Workforce Partnership's Metro One-Stop Career Training Center, the project will include day care, community meeting space and 120 units of affordable housing for working families. This mixed-use, transit-oriented development is hailed by many as a perfect example of smart growth.

"The Metro Career Center and Metro Villas project will provide dignified family housing, day care, career training, community meeting space, and other support services that will allow City Heights residents to improve their lives and livelihoods," said Councilmember Atkins. "This project is located within yards of the City Heights Transit Plaza, with premium express transit service to the downtown and UTC job centers."

The project will exceed its requirements for open space with two tot lots and landscaped common areas. It will also exceed its parking requirement with a multi-level, 485-space parking garage that will be shared by the office and housing tenants.

The project will be financed with a combination of state and local funds, including low- and moderate-income housing funds from both the City Heights and Centre City redevelopment areas.

The Metro Career Center is projected to open in the last quarter of 2003, with the Metro Villas expected to welcome its first residents in the summer of 2004. The Metro Center is being developed by the San Diego Revitalization Corporation, a special-projects subsidiary of Price Entities. The Metro Villas will be developed by two general partners, the City Heights Community Development Corporation and San Diego Interfaith Housing.

STRATEGIC PLANNING APPROVED FOR CITY HEIGHTS BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

In a separate action, Councilmember Atkins called for renewed efforts to organize and support City Heights businesses. As part of a Council action to approve the budgets of Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) citywide, Atkins called for an aggressive strategic planning process in City Heights intended to bring City Heights businesses and community members together to forge a vision for the future.

"The economic environment in City Heights has changed drastically in the last five years, and with it, the expectations of our resident and business constituents have changed as well," said Atkins, in offering an amendment to the budget motion to incorporate a strategic planning process for the City Heights BID. "I am committed to this strategic planning process, and I have allocated funds through the Office of Small Business to support the recommendations of the plan once it is completed."

As part of Councilmember Atkins' amendment, the City Council assigned the financial management of the City Heights BID to the City Manager, with an advisory body made up of five business owners in City Heights. Atkins' amendment was accepted, and then approved unanimously by the Council as part of the budget action.

In assigning the management to the City Manager, Atkins asked the members of the business district to devote themselves to the strategic planning process—without the distraction of having to oversee day-to-day operations and programs of the BID.

"I am asking the BID to take a little time out; to conserve their financial resources and focus on the outreach and planning process," Atkins remarked. "I am committed to helping the City Heights BID find the additional resources they will need to hire a professional, full-time director and maintain a strong presence in the University Avenue commercial corridor."

The City Council directed the City Manager to return at the end of the strategic planning process with recommendations for the future administration of the BID.

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